



*You're Invited to Roast a Turkey!*

*You are invited to  
Roast an Old Bird,*

*Walter Amo Vincent*

*at a luncheon celebrating his  
90th Birthday!*

*February 25, 2006  
from eleven until one  
East Central Community College  
725 Board Street  
Decatur, Mississippi*

*no gifts please*

*RSP by February 15  
601-693-1824*

# Ruth and Arno Vincent: An overdue recognition

Tuesday last at East Central Community College, Austin Bishop and I got to be participant-observers at one of those events that warms the heart and fuels the spirit. The occasion was the dedication of the Walter Arno Vincent Administration Building. One of my favorite good guys received a long overdue recognition. And responded with characteristic humor and grace.

Walter Arno Vincent served as president of ECJC from 1953 to 1961. However, his relationship with the college began in the mid-1930s. It has never been clear to me whether then ECJC President L.O. Todd or a young coed, Ruth Carr, recruited Arno from Martin to Decatur. I strongly suspect Dr. Todd "recruited" but Ruth "attracted."

Ruth and Arno Vincent are children of rural Mississippi, reared in the heart of the great depression. Further tempered by the experiences of World War II, the Vincents are another of those couples who affirm Tom Brokaw's analysis of "The Greatest Generation." Quiet, caring folk who are quick to share with others, they both lead by example. The Vincents make a difference in the quality of life of others.

Tuesday, after reminding the audience that he was "the oldest living alumnus of East Central," Arno noted the reason people are kind to "old folks" is that they recognize they may not get "another chance." This is not true of Arno and Ruth. They've been kind to young and old across a lifetime.

My colleague Dr. Eddie Smith, who is retiring as president of East Central Community College next June, was a student at the college when Arno Vincent served as president. Dr. Smith's office is located in the building now named to honor Arno's service to the college. And this building was constructed while Arno served as president. Some more of life's intersecting circles.

An outstanding community college president, Dr. Smith will leave many notable accomplishments at ECCC. An expanded campus. Growing programs and activities. Continuing quality. Excellent new facilities. His leadership in the recognition of Arno Vincent is a very bright star in his constellation of achievements.

For those of us who carry on about "values," the dedication event was a reminder of the values that have propelled the development of East Central Community College. Commitment to place. Commitment to service to community and country. Commitment to opportunities for people.

Consider. The first speaker, Miss Lucille Wood, arrived at EC as a student in 1950. Newly minted President Arno Vincent hired Lucille Wood as basketball coach in 1953. Miss Wood came home. Recognized as an



**Bill  
Scaggs**

outstanding coach and teacher, Miss Wood has served East Central's students for 46 years. That's commitment to calling and place! This lady loves "her" college.

Retired Mississippi National Guard Maj. Gen. Denver Brackeen was the second speaker. I came to admire Denver during his service as Dean of Students at ECJC. Recruited out of Hickory High School by then-EC basketball coach Arno Vincent, Brackeen still holds the single game rebounding record at Ole Miss. Gen. Brackeen was brought into the Guard by, you guessed it, Arno Vincent.

The third speaker was my friend Clyde Muse. Another east central Mississippi lad recruited to Decatur by L.O. Todd. Clyde was one of Coach Vincent's 80-plus "walk-ons" or try-out candidates for a basketball scholarship. In the "opportunity creating" tradition of his mentors, Todd and Vincent, Dr. Muse leads the largest community college in our state. And also leads my personal short list of great community college presidents.

Miss Wood, Gen. Brackeen and Dr. Muse shared warm and wonderful yarns about the ordinary ways their extraordinary mentor, Arno Vincent, shaped their life experiences. Math teacher. Coach. President. And friend.

In his response Arno reminisced about the late L.O. Todd. I was born in 1935, the year Dr. Todd "recruited" Arno Vincent to the Decatur campus for his first visit. Almost 30 years later, I was "recruited" by the same Dr. Todd to come from Gainesville to Meridian. So, like Arno, I was blessed to have Dr. Todd as a mentor. Another circle.

In short, it was a grand celebration embodying values I associate with East Central Community College. Loyalty. Opportunity. Service. Groundedness. Real love of people and place. How's that for nostalgia?

I had promised Austin not to indulge in my custom of hanging on "until the last dog is dead." We hurried away to other responsibilities. Arno and Ruth were surrounded by well wishers. I hope "the oldest living East Central alumnus" makes it until Sunday. He doesn't need my salute. But I need to honor him.

And I do have a question for Arno. Last time I looked at a map, Martin was in Lauderdale County. Was Dr. Todd actually recruiting a basketball player who lived in the East Mississippi Junior College District? Out-of-district recruiting? You bet! And it was a good trip.

Bill Scaggs is president emeritus of Meridian Community College and senior consulting editor for *The Meridian Star*.

# Vincent Is Alumnus of the Year

East Central Junior College at Decatur will honor former college president W.A. (Arno) Vincent of Meridian as "Alumnus of the Year" in special homecoming activities to be held on the college campus Saturday, October 6.

An alumni banquet will be held that night at 6:00 p.m., at which time Mr. Vincent will be presented a certificate and plaque for his outstanding accomplishments as an alumnus of the college. He will also be recognized during halftime ceremonies at the game between East Central and Northeast Junior College later in the evening.

A native of Collinsville, Vincent is married to the former Ruth Carr, a classmate at East Central. Mr. and Mrs. Vincent and youngest daughter are residents of Meridian, where he is Vice-President and branch manager of Banker's Trust of Meridian.

An outstanding athlete, Vincent was graduated from Martin High School, East Central Junior College, and Mississippi Southern, where he starred in football and basketball. Vincent was named to the All-State teams in both sports in 1937, and was named the "Outstanding Athlete" at East Central that same year. At Southern, where he again excelled in both sports, Vincent was named football and basketball captain. For his athletic ability, Mississippi Southern, now the

University of Southern Mississippi, named him to their football Hall of Fame.

## Masters From Ole Miss

A brief coaching and teaching career from 1939-41 was interrupted by a five-year armed service tour of duty when Vincent served the U.S. Navy, Pacific Fleet, as navigator, communications officer, and commanding officer of ships in anti-submarine warfare.

Upon completion of his master's degree at the University of Mississippi in 1948 and additional study at Northwestern University and the University of California, Vincent returned to East Central in 1947 as teacher. The following sixteen years at E.C.J.C. saw Arlo Vincent climb from teacher, to coach, to dean, to college president.

## Team Wins Championship

During his seven years as head basketball coach, the E.C.J.C. team won the Mississippi Junior College Basketball Championship, the Sub-Regional Championship, and finished fourth in national basketball competition at the national tournament in Hutchinson, Kans.

During his nine years as

President of East Central, the college increased in enrollment and academic standing, and the campus grew in size with the addition of a physical plant, Newsome Hall for Women, Todd Hall for Men, a new science building, a new president's home, and a new library.

Vincent moved his family to Meridian in 1964 to accept a position as Assistant Superintendent of Schools and Personnel Director, a position he held for eight years before joining the Banker's Trust staff.

## Community Leader

Community and state positions he has held include: President of the Newton County Development Association for nine years; President of the Mississippi Junior College Association; President of the Mississippi Association of Colleges; Associate Executive Secretary of the Mississippi Education Assoc.; Industrial Representative of Mid-Mississippi Development Assoc.; Boy Scout Director for twenty years; and recipient of the Silver Beaver Award.

Active in civic and church activities, Vincent is a Rotarian, Lions Club and Exchange Club member, and is lay leader in the Poplar Springs Drive Methodist Church.



Tom-Tom  
9/4/1953

ECCC

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## 1973 Alumnus of the Year

During the period he served as president, East Central experienced growth in many areas:

1. The Physical plant was expanded by the building of Todd Hall, Newsome Hall, the Burton Library, the Cross Science Hall, and the president's home.
2. The Vocational - technical services were expanded.
3. Advances were made in curriculum development

## MINOR CHANGES IN PERSONNEL OCCUR

Mr. Arno Vincent replaces Dr. L. O. Todd as President of East Central Junior College along with other changes in administration personnel.

The man to succeed Dr. L. O. Todd as the third President of East Central is by an interesting coincidence the same boy whom Dr. Todd, through his traditional interest in Mississippi rural boys, found on a farm and persuaded to come to East Central. Mr. Vincent recalled this incident in his interview remembering that this was the beginning of his connection with East Central.

Mr. Vincent, one of five children, was born at Collinsville, Mississippi, on February 29, 1916. He attended high school at Martin where he was an outstanding basketball star. After graduation from Martin, Mr. Vincent came to East Central in 1935 and graduated here in 1937. While he was here he was outstanding in football and basketball; incidentally he played in the first football game he ever saw. It was here he met and later married Miss Ruth Carr, who was from Winston County.

Upon graduation from East Central he enrolled at Mississippi Southern where he starred in both football and basketball, being captain of both teams. He was gradu-

## College Extends Property Holdings

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New property has been acquired by the college during the summer. Twenty acres of farm land, near the old fair ground will extend the farm land. This is to be used for (Continued On Page Three)

### 19 YEARS SERVICE SEES UNUSUAL GROWTH

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Dr. Todd left his position as superintendent of Philadelphia High School in 1934 to become the President of East Central. At this time the enrollment was housed in three buildings, but during his leadership the plant grew to be worth more than a million dollars, including buildings and property, and the area for students was expanded to a five-county radius. These counties are Newton, Scott

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The new auditorium is expected to be completed and ready for occupancy by Homecoming Day, November 7.

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Mr. Vincent remarked that he believes he holds the record for change of residence on the East Central campus. Last week he and Mrs. Vincent moved for the fifth time since they have been here—This time to East Central's "White House", as he designated the president's home.

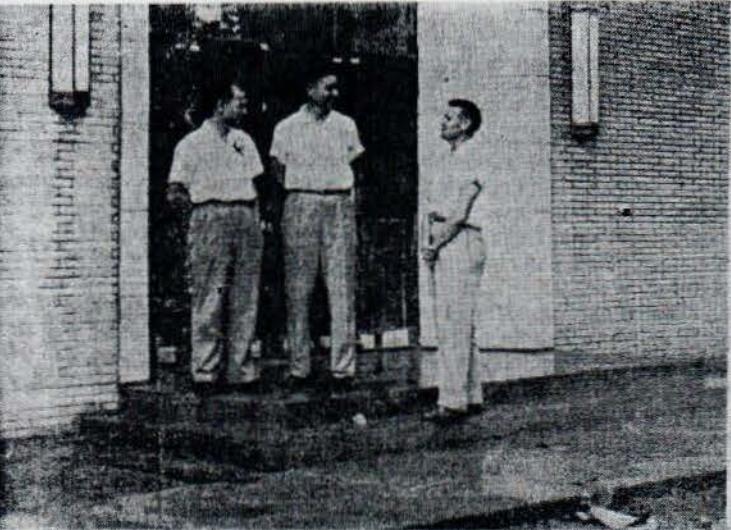
A number of other changes in administrative personnel will take effect this year. For the first time in its history East Central has a high school principal. Mr. Clayton Blount will serve in this capacity, having general supervision of the high school division, including the high school curricular, activities and study hall.

Another change in the administration of the school is in the position of Dean of Men. Mr. John Grace who has served in this capacity for two years is being replaced by Coach B. R. Lindsley, who has served as assistant football coach and instructor in physical education for the past year.

Mr. Vincent is initiating his first term as president with the announcement of the following committees which will serve during the year: Chapel: Mr. F.

## Pres. Arno Vincent Welcomes Students To 'East Central'

I want to extend a hearty welcome to all of you who are here for the first time.



## NEW AUDITORIUM NEARLY READY

### EXECUTIVE OFFICES ALSO LOCATED THERE

The new building containing an auditorium and administrative offices now being constructed at a cost of \$175,000 will house, besides the auditorium, with a seat capacity of 1002, about ten administrative offices.

New stage scenery for the audi-

torium will include a front curtain of old gold trimmed with black. The concert curtains and cyclorama will be gray damask. The auditorium will contain a Baldwin electric organ and a nine-foot Baldwin concert grand piano.

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## R. L. O. TODD LEAVES EAST CENTRAL



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Not only did Dr. Todd bring East Central to a high place among the junior colleges of America but he has also served as chairman of nearly every educational organization in the state and he has been active in many regional and national educational endeavors.

In the last fifteen years, Dr. Todd was mainly responsible in causing the budget to grow to about three-hundred thousand dollars, nearly ten times the amount it was fifteen years ago.

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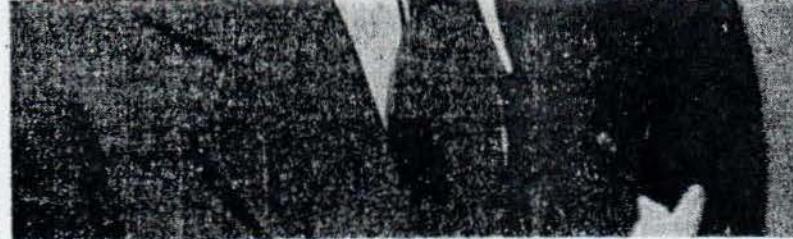
(Continued On Page Three)

## NOTICE

We need help. Yes, help. The opportunities are many and the work most interesting. Positions vacant are assistant photograph, sports writers, feature writers, departmental editors, columnists, reporters, circulation staff, typists, and ad staff. If you are interested, see Mr. Harris, Frank Brooks, E. Boyd, or Ruby Gunn.

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## MINOR CHANGES—

(Continued From Page One)  
Miss Hogan. Calendar: Mr. Roberts, Mr. Blount, and Miss Burton. Points: Mr. Cross, Mr. Tucker, and Mr. Leatherwood. Religion: Mrs. Sullivan, Bro. Cook, Miss Bryant, and Mr. Lindsley. Buildings and Grounds: Mr. Palmer, Mr. Tucker, and Miss Barber. Publications: Miss Harris, Mrs. Newsome, Miss Woodward, and Mr. Haywood. Activities: Mr. Lindsley, Mr. Blount, Miss Herrin, and Miss Barber. Radio and Publicity: Mr. Slothower, Mr. Blount, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Bobo. Decorations: Mrs. Sullivan, Miss Barber and Miss Freize. Homecoming: Mr. Fugerson, Mrs. Newsome, Mr. Slothower, Miss Herrin, Mr. Rives, and Mr. Fick. Senior Day: Mr. Roberts, Mr. Bedwell, Mr. Walker, Mr. Bobo, and Miss Hogan.